

## 1 Samuel 17:28-39 - Thursday, April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2014

- Last week we began what may arguably be the most fascinating and famous chapters in the Bible as it relates to David defeat of Goliath.
- We only made it to verse twenty-seven, so we'll pick it up a little before that so as to reset the scene of what has happened up to this point.
- This because, we were left hanging as the battlefield intensified once David arrived, and as we'll see shortly, it's about to get really good.

- It all started with the Philistine's occupying land belonging to the Israelites in the valley of Elah, as I pictured with this image on the screen.
- If that weren't bad enough, there introduced to this enormous giant of a man named Goliath who was believed to be more than 9 feet tall.
- And, this 9+ feet tall monster was all muscle and brute strength as evidenced by his weaponry weight an estimated two hundred pounds.

- To make matters even worse, the Israelites "were dismayed and greatly afraid" when he challenged them to send out a man to fight him.
- The problem is they were so terrified, that none of them would dare volunteer to accept Goliath's challenge, not even their own king, Saul.
- To their shame, the narrative tells us how that Goliath would blaspheme God, unchallenged, day and night for forty days and forty nights.

- It's at this juncture that the text takes us from the battlefield to the shepherd's field where we're re-introduced to a teenager named David.
- It seems that God has put on Jesse's heart to send David, his youngest of eight sons, to bring bread to and check on his three oldest sons.
- Then, once David arrives, it's not long before Goliath starts blaspheming God again, only this time it is heard by David and for the first time.

- Sadly, we're told when all the men of Israel heard Goliath's words; they were so "greatly dismayed and dreadfully afraid," they ran and hid.
- However, unbeknownst to Goliath, someone has arrived on the scene and though he's hearing him for the first time, he doesn't even flinch.
- He's not only unflinching in fearlessness he's angry in righteousness so much so, he questions them concerning someone killing Goliath.

(25) So the men of Israel said, "Have you seen this man who has come up? Surely he has come up to defy Israel; and it shall be *that* the man who kills him the king will enrich with great riches, will give him his daughter, and give his father's house exemption *from taxes* in Israel." (26) Then David spoke to the men who stood by him, saying, "What shall be done for the man who kills this Philistine and takes away the reproach from Israel? For who *is* this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?" (27) And the people answered him in this manner, saying, "So shall it be done for the man who kills him."

- Notice the reason for David's inquiry as to "what shall be done for the man who kills this Philistine," was for the taking away of the reproach.
- I point this out for two reasons, the first of which is this seems to indicate that only David was concerned about this reproach against Israel.
- I would suggest they were more concerned about the money, and King Saul's daughter than they were about the reproach against Israel.

- You probably already know where I'm going with this, such that it speaks to how we may be more carnally motivated by what's in it for us.
- This actually dovetails into the second reason, which is the source of David's courage and motivation to even think he could kill this Goliath.
- In other words, David's courage and motivation had set him apart from all the other men of Israel, his older brothers and the king included.

- I'm of the belief that we can trace the source of David's courage and motivation to first and foremost; he had a heart after God's own heart.
- And, as such, his heart was grieved by that which grieved God's heart, and his heart was also angered by that which angered God's heart.
- This is why David in his righteous anger would say, "Who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?"

- There's one more thing I want us to look at before we move on to verse twenty-eight and it has to do with why they feared and David didn't.
- Here's what I'm thinking, the Israelites looked at this giant problem through the lens of what they had to lose in terms of the flesh materially.
- Whereas conversely, David looked at this giant problem through the lens of what Israel had to lose in terms of their reproach, spiritually.

- The point being is when I look at my giant Goliath of a problem through the lens of the flesh; I will become filled with and motivated by fear.
- Conversely, when I look at my giant Goliath of a problem through the lens of the spirit; I become filled with courage and motivated by faith.
- As one so famously quipped, "instead of telling your God that you have a very big problem tell your problem that you have a very big God."

(28) Now Eliab his oldest brother heard when he spoke to the men; and Eliab's anger was aroused against David, and he said, "Why did you come down here? And with whom have you left those few sheep in the wilderness? I know your pride and the insolence of your heart, for you have come down to see the battle." (29) And David said, "What have I done now? *Is there* not a cause?" (30) Then he turned from him toward another and said the same thing; and these people answered him as the first ones *did*.

- This is interesting for a number of reasons not the least of which is David has to first, battle his own brethren, before he battles the enemy.
- I find this interesting because David is innocent of everything he's accused of in spite of his accusers being guilty of those very charges.
- Let me explain, Eliab falsely accuses him of pride and insolence (meaning rude and disrespectful behavior) vis-à-vis his own heart of pride.

One commentator said it best this way; "Here he taketh upon him that which belongeth to God alone and judgeth David's heart by his own."

Another commentator gives us even more insight by way of a character study of Eliab when he writes, "I am immediately struck by the fact that Eliab's rebuke is full of sarcasm and scorn – not unlike many older brothers! His question, 'With whom have you left those few sheep in the wilderness?' is derogatory and belittling. Is 'small' David getting too big for his britches, or is 'tall' Eliab embarrassed that his younger brother displays courage and faith that he lacks? ...Eliab does not come across as the concerned older brother; his words are intended to belittle and discourage David. In the context of the story, Eliab is an impediment to the great deed God will accomplish through David; he is a temporary roadblock on the path to victory. In fact, Eliab's sarcastic [and condescending] reply suggests a parallel with the enemy Goliath, who also speaks disdainfully of David. Ironically, small David will overcome all three tall men in this chapter, [Eliab, Saul, and Goliath]."

- I share that to say this, even though this likely hurt David, he did not take it too heart because he knew he wasn't being proud and insolent.
- In other words, had David taken Eliab's hurtful words and false accusations too heart he would have reacted in the flesh and lost the battle.
- Because David possessed a strength of character and stayed in the Spirit, he already won the battle, and Goliath was already a dead man.

Charles Spurgeon - "Immediately before the encounter with the Philistine he fought a battle which cost him far more thought, prudence, and patience. The word-battle in which he had to engage with his brothers and with king Saul, was a more trying ordeal to him than going forth in the strength of the Lord to smite the uncircumcised boaster. Many a man meets with more trouble from his friends than from his enemies; and when he has learned to overcome the depressing influence of prudent friends, he makes short work of the opposition of avowed adversaries."

- Be that as it may, and suffice it to say, we have here a powerful and personal take away, namely, don't let your Eliab's get under your skin.
- I've heard it said those God will choose to mightily use must have the mind of a scholar, the heart of a child, and the hide of a rhinoceros.
- Such is the case with David who ironically is outwardly small, yet inwardly he stands tall in spite of his detractors who're the polar opposite.

(31) Now when the words which David spoke were heard, they reported *them* to Saul; and he sent for him. (32) Then David said to Saul, "Let no man's heart fail because of him; your servant will go and fight with this Philistine." (33) And Saul said to David, "You are not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him; for you *are* a youth, and he a man of war from his youth." (34) But David said to Saul, "Your servant used to keep his father's sheep, and when a lion or a bear came and took a lamb out of the flock, (35) I went out after it and struck it, and delivered *the lamb* from its mouth; and when it arose against me, I caught *it* by its beard, and struck and killed it. (36) Your servant has killed both lion and bear; and this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, seeing he has defied the armies of the living God." (37) Moreover David said, "The LORD, who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear, He will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine." And Saul said to David, "Go, and the LORD be with you!"

- These verses are amongst the most precious to me personally by virtue of how God has used this in my life so profoundly and powerfully.
- Perhaps you'll indulge me just briefly, as I share with you some of the life lessons that are woven into the fabric of this particular passage.
- In order to do that, we'll need to sort of picture the scene here in our minds eye if for no other reason than to grasp the impossibility of it.

- In all fairness to king Saul, you can't really blame him for trying to talk this teenage shepherd boy, who is also a part time musician, out of it.
- If you think about it, Saul has a very compelling argument against this, such as Goliath has been fighting longer than David has been alive.
- I can't help but imagine what is going through David's mind as he's sitting across from Israel's king in his royal tent there on the battlefield.

- While I'm keenly aware David is clearly thinking about God giving him the victory over a bear and a lion, I wonder what else he's thinking.
- Is he thinking about Samuel coming to his house and anointing him the next king of Israel? Is he thinking this is when he becomes king?
- Could he even be thinking about the rewards he'll receive if he kills this uncircumcised Philistine who's brought reproach and defies God?

- I believe that it's none of the above and here's why, were these the motives of David's heart, Saul would pick up on it and not let him do it.
- This for two reasons the first of which is Saul knew the kingdom was torn from him, but doesn't yet know whom it will be that succeeds him.
- Second, to his credit, he must've discerned that God was with David, or he wouldn't risk the Philistines ruling over them if they're defeated.

- Herein lies the rich personal application via two rich life lessons that can be learned from this dialogue between a little David and king Saul.
- The first life lesson is that like David, God will prepare us for that which He will prepare for us, and sometimes the preparation is for years.
- And, by the way, we shouldn't want it to be any other way lest we prematurely find ourselves in a predicament for which we're ill prepared.

I like how one commentator said it; "God prepared David for this exact battle when David was a lowly shepherd. A lion attacked the lambs and David fought the lion. A bear came against the sheep and David battled the bear. All along, God prepared David to fight Goliath. How long did David prepare to fight Goliath? All of his life, up to that day. ... If David ran scared at the lion or the bear, he would never have been ready to fight Goliath now. ...David had no idea he was being trained to fight a giant. In the midst of our preparation we rarely see how God will use it. Yet now, David can look back and know that the same God who delivered him before will also deliver him now. David knew that God's help in times past is a prophecy of His help in the future.

- This actually dovetails into our second life lesson, which is the recalling in the present and even the future what God did for me in the past.
- Perhaps better said, we should never fear the future, nor should we ever doubt in the present, He who has always been faithful in the past.
- Don't doubt in the dark what God did for you or showed to you in the light, this because He's the same God yesterday, today and forever.

Charles Spurgeon - "It is wise to conclude that what God has done for us once He can and will do again. We have an unchanging helper to rely upon, and therefore we may reckon on [for] continual help.

- Before we move to verse thirty-eight and bring the study to a close, I'd like to share with you two times the Lord ministered this truth to me.
- The first was ten years ago, back in the year 2003, when my wife and I moved to the Islands to plant this wonderful and amazing church.
- Were it not for David rising from the pages of Holy writ as an example of God preparing us for what's prepared for us, we wouldn't be here.

- The second one was now almost eight years ago back in the year 2006, right after we had just planted this wonderful and amazing church.
- I'm speaking of when our daughter Noelle died on May 4<sup>th</sup>, of that year, only to plunge my wife and I into a dark season of unthinkable grief.
- Once again God used David the sweet Psalmist of Israel as an example of not doubting in the dark times what God showed you in the light.

(38) So Saul clothed David with his armor, and he put a bronze helmet on his head; he also clothed him with a coat of mail. (39) David fastened his sword to his armor and tried to walk, for he had not tested *them*. And David said to Saul, "I cannot walk with these, for I have not tested *them*." So David took them off.

- You'll forgive me yet again for us having to bring it to an end at this point in the narrative but Lord willing we'll pick it up here next week.
- However, until then, I would like for us to take note of these two verses so we can hit the ground running so as to maybe finish the chapter.
- Here's what I'd like for us to leave with, be who God has called you and equipped you to be. Don't try to be someone else it just won't work.